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Fig. 47. Bridge over the Bimfilie near Ebifonemajong (Esfuong Family) During the Rainy Season.

The privy (edilk), as Figure 16 shows, is in the plantain grove not very far from the houses. Frequently it is so close that the stench, especially when the wind is unfavorable, may become unbearable. The privy consists of a fairly deep pit with one or two pairs of forked sticks planted in the center; on top of these is placed a layer of tree trunks in such a manner that the middle ones extend from the edge of the pit only as far as the sticks and lie with their free ends in the forks. Then, a rectangular opening is left uncovered, and /83/ loam is thrown around this over the whole thing. Sometimes the loam covering is not put over it. Instead of toilet paper, dried corn husks are used. 514 364

It is worthy of note that the Pangwe also cultivate ornamental plants. These are placed in the village square, along the paths behind or to the side of the houses, or, in case the village consists only a single row of houses, they are planted where the opposite row of houses would ordinarily stand. Generally the ornamental plants are the following: an attractive Amaranthacea, Gomphrena globosa B. (ngôn IV), which also grows in America and may have been imported from there; and the so-called fever 351 247

grass, Andropogon schoenanthus L. (ošimentă'ngan = ošim [Ocimum] of the Whites), a plant which has likewise been imported.

The roads are often scarcely visible paths which are first trodden by hunters and used by elephants and later become wider through increased traffic. Naturally, however, one must always proceed along them in single file. Wherever small brooks happen to flow in the direction of travel, they are used as trails.

For the crossing of larger bodies of water, a few stems of the umbrella tree are tied together to form a raft or dugouts (bĕă, plural, mĕ, Fig. 45), otherwise employed for fishing purposes, are used. Bridges (ndzĕĕ I) are built only in rare cases, primarily in situations where the plantations and the village are situated on opposite banks of a river, thus necessitating regular and rapid passage between them. These bridges consist /84/ (Fig. 46 and 47) of several piers, each made up of two tree trunks planted into the ground in the form of a St. Andrew's cross and firmly tied together. One or more transverse beams are then placed over these piers. To serve as a railing, either ropes are tied to the upper ends of the piers, or sticks split lengthwise down the middle are fastened to them. When a bridge beam decays, a new one is placed on top of it, but no one thinks of restoring the framework which cannot support the greater weight, and for this reason the bridge soon collapses as it gets older.

More recently bridges have been built according to the European model (kăĕ̀ III), consisting of two rows of supporting piles and transverse beams over which logs are placed very close together, like our corduroy roads. These bridges are even more dangerous to life and limb than the older form, since supporting posts often collapse, the bridge frequently lists to one side, and it is possible to have a bad fall on the slippery log ends. /85/

Section 5

Economic Activities

First Part. Agriculture. General matters: tools, preparation of the soil, division of labor. The

in 1954 in connection with a study of family budgets.

amount of food necessary to maintain the population: a crop census was taken in 1948 in one of the Sangmélima cantons (2). In order to

2. Report of the administrative officer, J. M. Soupault. An average individual's requirement would be: 250 maize plants, 330 manioc plants, 130 plantains, 110 macabo, 7 kilograms of rice, and 32 kilograms of groundnuts.

satisfy the needs of 6, 249 inhabitants there is no "exportation" to speak of. The canton used to produce 1, 635, 000 maize plants, 2, 049, 000 manioc, 824, 190 plantain bananas, 687, 800 macabo. It furthermore provided 44 tons of rice, 200 tons of groundnuts. There were 85, 180 fruit trees producing various kinds of fruit (Pachylobes /Canarium edulis Hooker, known as assa in Pahouin country—Ed./, Estulia, oranges, etc.)

Clearing land by burning and the absence of organic fertilizer probably explain the exhaustion of the soil and the shifting cultivation that results from it.

The breeding and rearing of small animals is nevertheless understood and practiced: goats, dogs, fowls, pigs were and still are plentiful in the villages. These animals do not seem to contribute much to the food supply nor to the economic life. The very limited practice of selling pieces of pork has dates from recent years. As a matter of fact, animals were useful for giving quasi-ritual presents, for paying bride prices, and for celebrating family occasions: at a marriage, burial, and the end of mourning, two or three goats were killed to provide food for the relatives.

Of course, these animals are not stabled or fed; the herds wander along the outskirts of villages and do not fail to plunder the gardens. There are innumerable classic quarrels between farmers and herders (with the slight difference here that no one is exclusively a herder nor exclusively a farmer). Was the practice of enclosing by hedges established so as to avoid such depredations, or to give military protection to the settlements? Whatever the origin, this practice associated with the raising of animals would have made it possible to avoid

erosion and preserve the fertility of the soil. At present it would be a definite exaggeration to speak of an enclosure system, as may be done about the Bamiléké in the western Cameroons. Did such a system ever exist in Pahouin country, and are the humble hedges sometimes to be found encircling villages or plantations traces of it? However that may be, the practice could be very beneficial, and its development is much to be desired.

The raising of animals is now on the decline, especially in villages removed from the main roads. Are sacrifices requiring goats and hens passing into disuse? /31/ Have vehicular traffic and the number of fowls run over prevented the renewal of the leasing out of domestic animals /?/ /cheptel/. These various causes may have been simultaneously at work, but the reason most often given is the development of cacao plantations. Without fences, the raising of goats and the planting of cacao trees are incompatible. To protect their plantations or to avoid endless quarrels, owners of herds have had to limit their undertakings.

Modern agriculture

Cacao is indeed the symbol and the essential component of a modern economy. From this crop and from the agricultural, juridical, and economic practices which it entails, a thousand improvements or seeds of progress appear throughout the society.

It would, however, be unfair not to mention the other economic activities of the Pahouin districts, although their influence and financial return are far behind that of cacao. Timber, though its importance has decreased, played an essential role a few decades ago. African entrepreneurs are rare in this industry where equipment is complicated and expensive. A fairly large tonnage of palmetto is sold when the market is good, although the best soil and climate for palms is not to be found here (1).

1. The Pahouin of the southern Cameroons, the Boulou and Ntoumou particularly, dislike climbing trees and often sell the bunches of dates to Mekaé on the tree. (P. A.)

But cacao remains the master crop. Its cultivation has become a part of the mores and has left its mark on psychological patterns.

shed with a roof low enough to /43/ give good protection from the sun. Some villages are placed at right angles to the road; others follow an L or Y plan, with several minsen. Family "allotments" are separated by hedges of euphorbia, castor-oil plant, hibiscus, and bougainvillea. Sometimes one comes across sheepfolds, although in old-style (and most contemporary) villages small livestock roam at will. A village often includes a guesthouse (ayak).

In building operations the man generally takes charge of the framework and the laths, leaving to the women the preparation and application of the banco /clay daub?/. But European-style huts with their elaborate door frames and often cement floors are more and more the work of specialized artisans, who are paid to supervise the family labor provided by the owner. These men have nevertheless preserved, along with the English term "mason," the old name nlon nda, literally, hut-weaver, which goes back to the time when huts were made of sewn bark (1).

1. The dwelling continues to evolve: framed doors, windows, and shutters are in general use today. The dimensions of the buildings lead to the construction of a real frame. Finally, to possess a sheet-iron roof is a sign of wealth. In recent years there has arisen a real passion for the improvement of dwelling: in the Cameroons we may estimate that 10 percent of the dwellings now built in the bush are the most modern type. (J.B.)

2. Groupings and Relationships

The main divisions of Pahouin society are both exactly defined in the minds of its members themselves and at the same time uncertain for the European observer, who is constantly tempted to state them clearly in organic forms accessible to his "logic" and who is hindered by the variations or the dialectal confusions of Pahouin terminology. Father Trilles, basing his observations on the Fang of Gabon alone, reached a sort of palaeontological reconstruction of the "Fang nation," extremely theoretical, yet not without basis

881 304 779 782 do all he can to end this state. As soon as he has killed an enemy, he hurries with the victim's hand to his father. Circumcision then solemnly takes place before all the warriors, and his marriage is celebrated as soon as the wound has healed.

881 304 779 3) Time of the ceremony

The chief first decides upon the date, which is almost invariably in the eight days before a full moon.

As soon as the chief has announced that circumcision will shortly take place, he indicates all the children who are to be included; they, under his direction, go off into the forest not [342] far from the village. After a large space has been cleared, they build open little huts or mere shelters, where they live all together.

Their food is left at the beginning of the path leading to the huts, for no one is supposed to approach; access [523] is above all strictly forbidden to women. The food is plentiful, [264] and nothing must be thrown away or hidden; everything must be eaten, and the chief supervises this rigorously. (1)

1. One of our missionaries observed the same custom among the more advanced populations of the interior. He even mentions this fact: the rule is so strict that one of the candidates was forced three times in succession to swallow the food that his stomach persistently rejected.

4) Preparations

• [65] All around the place where the boys are confined, a fence of reeds (1) is erected, which no one dares jump over. This seclusion

1. The place of circumcision shows well enough that the rite is like a consecration, by blood sacrifice, of the sexual life to which the young man is thereafter admitted. Lagrange, op. cit., p. 344.